Medical objects are composed of:

**Medical material**
All the equipment and supplies necessary for the functioning of medical units.

**Medical ships and craft**
Any medical transport by water

**Medical transport and transportation**
Any means of transportation, whether military or civilian, permanent or temporary, assigned exclusively to medical transportation and under the control of a competent authority. It may be a medical vehicle, a medical ship or craft, or a medical aircraft. Medical transports are protected by international law and may bear the distinctive emblem prescribed for that purpose.

Medical transportation means the conveyance by land, water or air of the wounded, sick and shipwrecked, medical and religious personnel and medical material.

**Medical unit**
A military or civilian establishment or other unit organized for medical purposes, namely the search for, collection, transportation, diagnosis or treatment – including first-aid treatment – of the wounded, sick and shipwrecked, or for the prevention of disease.
Medical units include hospitals [7] and other similar units, blood transfusion centres, preventive medicine centres and institutes, and the medical and pharmaceutical stores of such units. Medical units may be fixed or mobile, permanent or temporary.

**Medical vehicle**

Any medical transport (i.e. means of medical transportation) by land.

### OUTLINE

Chapter 7, IV, Protection of Medical Goods and Objects [8]

### LEGAL SOURCE

**protection**

GCI, 19 [9] (see ICRC updated Commentary [10]) and 35 [11] (see ICRC updated Commentary [12])

CIHL, 28 [13–30] [14]

**protection of medical units**

HR, 27 [15]

GCI, 19 [9] (see ICRC updated Commentary [10]) 23 [16] (see ICRC updated Commentary [17])

PI, 8/e [18] and 12 [19–14] [20]
PII, 11 [21]

loss of protection

GCI, 21 [22] (see ICRC updated Commentary [23]) 22 [24] (see ICRC updated Commentary [25])

CASES

Cameroon, Law on the Protection of the Emblem and the Name Red Cross [26]

Lebanon, Helicopter Attack on Ambulances [27]

Iran/Iraq, UN Security Council Assessing Violations of IHL [28] (A. Annex, Paras. 41 [29] and 44 [30])

Yemen, Obstructing Medical Care [31]

South Sudan: Medical Care Under Fire [32]

The armed conflict in Syria [33]

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health [34]

UN, Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit [35]
Afghanistan, Attack on Kunduz Trauma Centre

ICRC, International Humanitarian Law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts in 2015 (Paras. 152, 157, 158, 163)

UN, Security Council Resolution 2286 on Attacks on Hospitals

Yemen, Potential Existence and Effects of Naval Blockade

Italy, Use of force against ambulances in Iraq

Syria, the Battle for Aleppo

South Sudan, Attack in Malakal UN Protection Site

Yemen, Humanitarian Impact of the Conflict

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Suggested readings:


Further readings:


CAUDERAY Gérald C., “Means of Identification for Protected Medical Transports”, in *IRRC*, No. 300, May-June 1994, pp. 266-278.


**Source URL:** https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/medical-objects

**Links**
